# The House Built Off the Books: A Witness against You

One of the apparent advantages of the sin of dishonest gain is the illusion of financial efficiency: the possibility of accomplishing more with less money—money that, often, is not sufficient. Yet this “advantage” comes with a moral and legal price. To obtain such gains, we are often compelled to collaborate with people who evade paying taxes and do not issue fiscal documents. In this way, we not only break the law, but become accomplices to tax evasion and partners in robbing the public good—like Judas, who stole from the common purse.

By accepting such practices, we support a culture of darkness, where lying, theft, and lack of responsibility are promoted. We join those who choose to live dishonestly, and our actions place us not only outside the law, but also in Judas’s greed.

Scripture describes this illusion of dishonest gain very clearly: “Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.” (Proverbs 9:17-18)

This passage shows that the sin of greed may seem attractive and advantageous at first—“sweet” and “pleasant”—but in reality it leads to spiritual death and ruin. Gain obtained through iniquity is not blessed, but cursed. What appears to be a convenient solution is a snare that destroys the soul.

It is the sin of Judas—the love of money blinded him, leading ultimately to the betrayal of the Lord Jesus and to a tragic death. The end of Judas is a solemn warning: dishonest gain not only ruins the conscience, but can lead to eternal loss.

Building your house “off the books” — a witness against you

A telling example is the construction of a house. Let us suppose that the total cost is $80,000. Approximately half of this amount ($40,000) is labor, paid under the table, without taxes and without fiscal documents.

If this labor were declared and taxed, the following taxes would need to be paid:

• VAT (21%): $8,400

• Social contributions & income taxes (approx. 45%): $18,000

• Total taxes: $26,400

Therefore, if the work were done honestly, the real cost of construction would rise from $80,000 to $106.400, a 33% increase. This example shows how much is “saved” by avoiding taxes—and how great the moral compromise is.

By accepting these practices, we become accomplices to tax evasion and join those who steal from what belongs to the community. In God’s eyes, this is a form of theft and unlawful gain.

Scripture warns with terrifying seriousness about those who pursue dishonest gain to build their house and protect their family: “Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong” (Jeremiah 22:13).

A house built through injustice will not be a refuge, but a monument to wrongdoing. Nothing is hidden before God — neither well-crafted schemes, nor untaxed labor, nor materials bought without receipts, nor beams set in place with thoughts of dishonest gain. Divine justice penetrates into the most hidden details of life. Even the wood, the stone, the beam — all become witnesses to injustice. Wrongdoing cannot be covered with plaster, hidden inside walls, or buried under a roof. It will cry out. It will testify. It will condemn on the day of judgment.

Scripture speaks plainly on this: “Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain, setting his nest on high to escape the clutches of ruin! You have plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life. The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it” (Habakkuk 2:9–11).

James 5:4 says the same — the wages withheld from workers cry out against those who have cheated them, and the cries of the laborers reach the ears of the Lord Almighty. In the same way, money gained by concealing income is not silent. It cries out! It is a living testimony of sin — evidence that rises up against the one who obtained it unjustly.

It is a dangerous illusion — a fatal deception — to think that safety can be built on crooked foundations. The person who builds their future on wrongdoing is only preparing their own collapse. What may seem like a well-built house, a “high nest” safe from danger, is in reality a fortress of shame and proof of guilt.

The same situation appears in many other areas: painting a house, repairing heating, electrical or plumbing systems, renting out an apartment, fixing a car, agricultural work (plowing, sowing, harvesting), buying and cutting firewood, drilling a well, and so on. These are often carried out “off the books” to avoid paying VAT or other taxes. They may be done without paperwork if we love the wages of wrongdoing.

For example, if someone buys firewood worth 3,000 lei without a receipt, they avoid paying 21% VAT — that's 630 lei (or around $145), a considerable sum for those with low incomes. Yet this apparent "gain" is an injustice condemned by God.

Scripture warns us about the kind of people we become when we join with thieves to share unjust gain: "But to the wicked God says: 'What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips? You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you. When you see a thief, you join with him'" (Psalm 50:16–18).

This partnership is not just a social or legal mistake — it is a spiritual choice that leads to death. "The partner of a thief hates his own life" (Proverbs 29:24).

These verses leave no room for interpretation: when, for the sake of some advantage, we agree to work with those who evade taxes, we become accomplices to theft and align ourselves with those who despise law and truth. This is not merely an economic decision, but a spiritual stance — a choice between light and darkness.

To live in the light means to reject every form of dishonesty, even when it is hard and means we can no longer do what we had planned. True faith is seen in daily choices — including how we relate to money, taxes, and work.

To claim that God is with you while living in dishonesty is to deny His holiness. God cannot be manipulated by words or appearances. He searches the heart and knows the deeds. True fellowship with Him requires a clean life, a purified conscience, and a walk in the light. Only then does the promise "I will be with you" become a blessed reality — and not a dangerous illusion.

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*This post is an excerpt from the booklet "Life Lived in the Righteousness of Christ", which you can read in full, free of charge. More studies and resources for spiritual awakening are available at [https://www.unmodifiedword.com](https://www.unmodifiedword.com).*